

A Promise Remembered

WHEN I BEGAN MY CAREER with The Fund for Animals in 1989, I worked on a campaign to stop the notorious Hegins pigeon shoot, a contest held in Pennsylvania every Labor Day in which thousands of birds were wounded and killed in a macabre carnival atmosphere. I worked on the issue for more than a decade. Progress often was frustratingly slow, and we received much well-intentioned advice from many quarters to “quit wasting our resources” and “find a more realistic target.”

One year, deep into the seemingly endless campaign, my colleagues and I went to the killing field the day after the shoot to collect the pigeons who had been left to die. We found more birds than I care to recall—wounded, frightened, in pain, and unable to fly. Picking up a pigeon from the ground, I was horrified to see that one of her legs was completely gone and the other was hanging by a shred of skin. Maimed as she was and peppered with birdshot, there was no



WALTER LARRIMORE

hope for her survival. I will never forget holding this bird while she died; it was one of those moments that changed my life forever. As the breath left her small body, I made a silent promise: “I don’t care what it takes, or how long it takes, or how much money it takes—we will put an end to this.”

Thankfully, Cleveland Amory—The Fund’s founder and president at the time—and the rest of the staff were every bit as determined as I was. We did not give up. And after several more years of legislative efforts, court battles, public outreach, and economic pressure—just when I was questioning whether we would ever win this battle—

the contest’s sponsors finally signed an agreement that shut the Hegins pigeon shoot down for good.

Now that The Fund and The HSUS have joined forces, my job is to supervise an amazing staff working on major campaigns against the fur trade, factory farming, inhumane hunting practices, and animal fighting and cruelty. I spend much of my time in the office concentrating on strategic planning, every day making tough decisions about where best to invest our resources to stop the greatest amount of animal suffering.

Despite the analytical nature of strategic planning, I find that it’s still an ethical dilemma and an emotional decision when weighing “practical” matters or “realistic” compromises, and I recall that dying pigeon on the field at Hegins. I couldn’t save her, but we did save tens of thousands of others from having to share her fate. And while I only rarely get to see the animals on whose behalf we are working these days, I will always remember my promise as we work to create a more humane world.

—Heidi Prescott, Senior Vice President, Campaigns

The Cape Wildlife Center also supported the Cape Cod Stranding Network’s efforts to rescue stranded marine mammals.



Cape Cod Stranding Network’s efforts to

rescue stranded marine mammals. And for local residents we produced our *Wild News and Views* newsletter and began a new Wild Words lecture series.

The Fund for Animals Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in California continued to provide around-the-clock response to calls from individuals and agencies



about injured wildlife.

We rescued and released more than 330 rehabilitated patients back into the wild during the year and provided care for more than 400 animals.

Our Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) teams provided free veterinary services

worth nearly \$1.5 million in 2005, as more than 42,000 animals received care in our clinics. RAVS teams—including nearly 900 veterinary students from 25 schools in the United States, Europe, and Latin America—worked in communities from North Dakota to Easter Island, and from Sri Lanka to Maine. RAVS also



RAY ELBANKS

More than 400 wild animals received care at The Fund for Animals Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in 2005.

deployed nearly 400 veterinarians and veterinary technicians in response to disaster

Our Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) teams brought veterinary services and humane education to communities around the world like these in Peru and El Salvador.



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